

TONNAGE DUTIES ON VESSELS

Exchange of notes at Paris November 13, 1915, and February 10, 1917

Entered into force February 10, 1917

Department of State files

The American Ambassador to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Paris, November 13th, 1916

EXCELLENCY:

By a Note under date of September 13th last, relative to the remeasurement of American vessels calling at French ports, for the proper calculation of tonnage dues, Your Excellency was pleased to propose a reciprocal agreement between the United States and France, whereby the French authorities would accept the measurement of American vessels at French ports, provided a similar privilege were accorded to French registered vessels calling at American ports.

The Department of State, to whom a copy of the above mentioned letter was duly transmitted, has now replied that the matter was referred to the Secretary of Commerce who, by Section 2 of the Act of August 5th 1882,¹ is authorized to accept the measurement of foreign vessels in ports of the United States when the measurement laws of foreign countries and of the United States are substantially similar. The Secretary of Commerce states that his Department understands that for some time past the admeasurement

¹ 22 Stat. 300.

regulations of France have been substantially similar to the British Board of Trade rules which are, in turn, practically similar to the rules of the United States, for which reason a general letter, No. 77, was issued on August 25, 1914, accepting the tonnage of French vessels as denoted in their certificates of registry or other national papers. A copy of that letter is enclosed, from which Your Excellency will see that since its issuance, the Government of the United States has in this matter followed the course desired by the French authorities.

Nevertheless, my Government instructs me to inform Your Excellency that the Department of Commerce will be pleased to have the reciprocal treatment extended to American vessels in French ports in the form indicated by Your Excellency, namely:

“La jauge inscrite aux papiers de bord des navires français et des navires des Etats-Unis d’Amérique sera acceptée réciproquement dans les ports de France et des Etats-Unis pour la perception des droits de navigation. Toutefois si des différences importantes venaient à être constatées entre la jauge de France et la jauge des Etats-Unis, les administrations des deux pays auront l’une et l’autre le droit de rectifier le tonnage pour la perception des droits. Ces rectifications n’auront d’effet que pour le voyage au cours duquel la nécessité du relèvement de la jauge aurait été reconnue et constatée”.

“The measurements given in the ship’s papers of French vessels and vessels of the United States of America shall be reciprocally accepted in the ports of France and of the United States for the payment of the tonnage dues. Nevertheless if important differences should be noted between the French measurements and the measurements of the United States, the administrations of the two countries shall have the right to rectify the tonnage for the payment of dues. These rectifications shall not have effect except for the voyage in the course of which the necessity of the re-measurement shall have been recognized and noted”.

As this may be accomplished by an exchange of notes, I will be glad to receive Your Excellency’s acceptance to the proposal I have the honor to make you herein; and at the same time, two or three copies of the latest edition of the French measurement regulations.

With assurances of my high regard, I have the honor to be, Your Excellency’s most humble and obedient servant,

WM. G. SHARP

His Excellency

Monsieur Briand

President of the Council

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paris

The Minister of Foreign Affairs to the American Ambassador

[TRANSLATION]

FRENCH REPUBLIC
MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Direction of Administrative
and Technical Affairs
Sub-Direction of International
Unions and Consular Affairs
Measurement of Ships
United States

PARIS, *February 10, 1917*

MR. AMBASSADOR,

In answer to a letter from Your Embassy, of November 13th 1916, I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that the Minister of Finance has caused the necessary instructions to be given to the Custom House Department for the application of the Franco-American agreement upon measurement.

Your Excellency will find enclosed three copies of the circulars of the General Direction of the Custom House, relative to the decrees of June 22nd, 1904, and January 10th 1912 upon the measurement of vessels.

Kindly accept, etc.

For the Minister and by authorization,
the Minister plenipotentiary, Director
p.i.

MAURICE HERBETTE